

IN connection with the presentation of Willard Holcomb's dramatization of "Lorna Doone" at the Belasco this week, an interesting phase of the educational use of motion pictures was brought to the attention of the writer. Mr. Holcomb received a letter calling his attention to the publication in *Motography*, the moving picture magazine, of an article describing a lecture for the deaf on "Lorna Doone," delivered in sign language, by Prof. E. M. Gallaudet, of Kendall Green, and perfectly reproduced by the motion picture camera, for the benefit of the deaf and dumb in all parts of the country.

The author of the article, Willard Howe, says in part:

"One of the essential characteristics of the motion picture has always seemed to be its lack of words, its inability to talk. The silent drama, the 'talkless picture,' has never had a certain class of people as the only means whereby their language can be recorded. This is the sign language, by means of which the deaf converse. What the photograph is to those who can hear, the cinematograph is to the deaf—a permanent record of thought expression. The sign language has never had a means of permanent record, and, consequently, no fixed form. It varies with each individual, and in different sections of the country dialect peculiarities have been unconsciously evolved, as in other languages. The need of overcoming this difficulty led to experimentation with the motion picture as a medium, as it was foreseen that a series of sign addresses and lectures thrown upon the screen successively in every section of the country before thousands of deaf mutes and always in the same uniform form would serve to give uniformity and stability to the language, such as it had never enjoyed."

The first experiments in this direction received a demonstration at the Buffalo exposition. It was attempted to reproduce in the sign language such pieces as the Lord's Prayer and "Nearer, My God, to Thee" by means of the cinematograph, but the effort proved unsuccessful, owing to the imperfect projection of those days. It was not until about two years ago that interest in the matter was revived, under the instigation of George W. Veditz, the editor of the *Deaf American*, who believed that perfected methods of motion picture operation evolved during the intervening years would lead to more satisfactory results. The National Association of the Deaf took up the movement and appointed a committee with representation in every State to raise a fund to take motion pictures of sermons, addresses, and lectures in the sign language by masters of the medium. This fund has already passed the \$5,000 mark, and it is proposed to raise \$15,000 more to set aside as an endowment fund for the use of the association. An interesting feature, indicating the wide enthusiasm stirred by the movement, is that all contributions are in small sums, ranging from a penny to \$5.

"The first film resulting from the new movement is a 'silent' lecture on 'Lorna Doone' and the county of Devonshire, wherein the famous novel has its setting. The lecturer is Prof. E. M. Gallaudet, of Washington, director of Kendall Green, the only college for the deaf and dumb in the world. He tells in the language of signs about his journey through the 'Lorna Doone' country, describing the people, the customs, and the buildings in a thoroughly interesting manner. At an exhibition of this film before the inmates of Kendall Green, an appreciative demonstration followed, leaving no doubt as to the educational and entertaining qualities of the film."

"The film is said to be a success from the photographic standpoint. The work was done by S. G. Boernstein, of the Capital Film Company, of Washington. Knowing something of the signs of the deaf mutes himself, the photographer was able to calculate the speed at which to turn his machine, in order not to miss any of the small fingerings and at the same time not blur the arm movements. Manager Boernstein called into play all the niceties of his skill. As a result the film renders the lecturer's motions clearly and comprehensibly."

"Dr. Gallaudet is the only surviving son of the founder of American deaf-mute education, and he is recognized as the greatest living master of the sign language. Fifty years hence this film will be as priceless to the deaf of that day as would be a phonograph record to-day of Washington's Farewell Address or Webster's Plymouth oration."

That Chicago is running New York a close second as a theatrical producing center is shown in the following list of plays that had their premieres the past season in the city by the lakes:

The Return of Peter Grimm, Dismal, Maggie Pepper, The Girl of My Dreams, The Fascinating Widow, The Great Name, The Fox, Sausages for the Goose, The Deep Purple, The Aviator, The Film Princess, The First Night, Three Million Dollars, Teresa Be Mine, When Sweet Sixteen, The Mayflower, The Happiest Night of His Life, Jumping Jupiter, The Naked Truth, The Seventh Daughter, Two Men and a Girl, Love and Politics, Will o' the Wisp, The Heart Breakers, The Member from Oskari, The Girl in Waiting, The Stranger, In Search of a Sinner, Her Son, The Sins of the Fathers, The Remittance Man, The Fairy Tale, Green Stockings, The Quality of Mercy, The Rose, The Wife Tamers, The Bachelor Belle, The Sweetest Girl in Paris, The Girl I Love, United States Minister Bedloe.

In the list there are quite a few plays which have not seen the New York stage, for instance: The Return of Peter Grimm, Maggie Pepper, Green Stockings, Dismal, The Fascinating Widow, The Fox, When Sweet Sixteen, The Girl of My Dreams, and The Sweetest Girl in Paris.

Theatrical acquaintances of the writer, dropping into the city from time to time

SCENE FROM THIS WEEK'S PLAY AT COLUMBIA.



A lively situation in "What Happened to Jones."

this summer, have expressed their inability to understand the hold upon the Washington summer public, evidenced by the capacity audiences that greet every performance of the Columbia Players.

The secret of the tremendous success of the play lies in the years of patient perseverance on the part of the management to build up a summer clientele and in the perfect teamwork developed by Edward Curtis, the Players' stage director. For the past two years the Columbia management has been forcing the Washington public into the habit of going to the Columbia. Such a habit once formed it is an difficult to overcome an infirmity or optimism. That the Washington public "has the Columbia habit" is demonstrated by the fact that the great majority of seats are laid aside each week for regular patrons who have their special seats and special nights for every performance.

The team work of the organization was never better demonstrated than during the past week. "An American Widow" is one of those light, fanciful comedies that depend upon the snap and vim with which they are played to hold the interest of the audience. Through Director Curtis' able efforts and the enthusiasm of the players themselves the performances of this play went with a dash and spirit worthy of a few weeks' rehearsal metropolitan company endeavoring to secure a long run on Broadway.

E. R. S.

THE WEEK'S PLAYBILLS.

Belasco—"Lorna Doone."

The Belasco Theater stock company, the Vagabonds, will this week present Willard Holcomb's dramatization of R. D. Blackmore's famous romance of the Exmoor, "Lorna Doone." It was the dramatist's purpose to give a semi-private reading of his play at the Playhouse this evening, but this design was frustrated. At a rehearsal of this promised reading week ago, there happened to come two members of the Belasco stock company, and so impressed were they with the worth of Mr. Holcomb's dramatization that an arrangement was at once entered into to present it at the Belasco during the present week.

So popular has been the book, and so dramatic the story, that playwrights of England and America have many times attempted to place "Lorna Doone" on the stage in a fitting and acceptable manner. Plays by the score have been offered to managers, but none of these, with but one possible exception, has found their way to the stage. The exception was a drama called "Lorna Doone," and produced at the Grand Opera House, Chicago, a dozen or more years ago. The version then presented did not meet with success, and for the reason that the dramatist had been unable to devise a good play from the material.

Mr. Holcomb's version is divided into four acts. The first of these is founded upon Blackmore's latest story, "Slay by the Doones," the dramatic rights to which have been obtained exclusively by Mr. Holcomb from the sole executrix of the estate of the late novelist. This relates dramatically what is briefly referred to in the original novel—the murder of Farmer Ridd by the outlaw Doones of Badgry Forest, Exmoor, in the west of England, on the "debatable ground" lying between the counties of Devonshire and Exmoor. For this reason, as well as from wholesome dread of the Doones, the authorities of both counties excuse themselves from prosecuting the outlaws, whereupon John Ridd swears vengeance upon his father's slayers. His sole recruit is one Tom Faggs, an ex-highwayman, who, to win his pardon, and also John's sister, Annie Ridd, joins in the campaign.

In the second act John Ridd visits Doone Valley to spy out the famous stronghold of the outlaws. He meets and falls in love with their "queen," the dainty maiden known to all lovers of romance as Lorna Doone. Although he supposes her to be a daughter of the man who murdered his father, he reconciles his scheme of revenge with one to rescue Lorna, and almost succeeds in persuading the maiden, when he is surprised by his rivals among the Doones and escapes the paternal fate only through the assistance of the old "witch," Mother Meldrum.

In Act III, having perfected their plan of attack, Tom and John Ridd invade the very stronghold of the Doones, where John succeeds in winning St. Raso's reluctant consent to his engagement with Lorna, but at the very moment when it would seem that this romance is to be consummated it is discovered that the supposed "brother's" daughter is none other than the Countess of Dugal, who was kidnapped in childhood by the Doones. Therefore, although John Ridd achieves his vengeance on the murderers of his father, he finds himself further than ever from the lady of his choice, who is now coming to London, under the guardianship of an old Scotch uncle, Earl Brandish, who plans to marry her to his only son.

Readers of the book can forecast how this love and revenge drama this production, but Mr. Holcomb has provided a few surprises not in print. The celebrated "snowstorm" escape is omitted as being impracticable on the stage, especially at this season, and likewise the death of Carver Doone by sinking into "The Wizard's Slough," where John throws him, but an equally certain if less lingering punishment has been provided for the arch villain of the romance, while spectators will not have occasion to complain of lack of thrilling situations in the play.

In fact, Mr. Holcomb frankly calls his version a "romantic melodrama," in the old and true meaning of the phrase, for the action is accompanied and often emphasized by appropriate music, composed especially for this production by Harry Wheaton Howard, who has also provided settings for several of the songs found in the novel, notably the "Exmoor Harvesting Song" and Lorna's "Melody of Love."

The scenery of this production was painted from water colors from the brush of Will H. Chandler, from the author's photographs of real Devonshire views, while the costume plays were sketched by Mr. Holcomb's son Wynne.

The cast of characters, especially suited to the roles, is as follows:

John Ridd..... Percy Standing
Tom Faggs..... Charles Hopkins
St. Raso..... Puller Melish
Carver Doone..... Willard Holcomb
Earl Brandish..... William H. Conley
Annie Ridd..... Virginia Pearson
John Ridd..... W. H. Conley
Mrs. Ridd..... Charles C. Shaw
Miss Ridd..... Madeleine Allen
Annie Ridd..... Virginia Pearson
Mother Meldrum..... Mrs. Whitcomb
George Carver..... George Carver
Lorna Doone..... Mrs. Hopkins

The Cosmos.

"The Musical Barnyard," booked for this week at the Cosmos, is said to be one of the most original musical novelties in vaudeville. As its name implies, the stage setting is that of an old barnyard with its usual inhabitants, all of which are cleverly used to conceal cunning and ingenious musical instruments and novel effects. The Yvoss company, who present the act, are expert musicians. Mark Davis and company will present their latest version of the successful singing comedy sketch, "Hans, the Grocery Boy," with special scenery. The sketch is noted for its clever dialogue and the many opportunities it presents for the singing and yodling numbers of its principals. A protean comedy sketch is offered by Lee M. Kantor and Anna H. Goldie, entitled "John Worthington's Wife," with Miss Goldie in the title role, playing four parts and making the changes so quickly and completely as to be a notable feature of the presentation. Adde and Coulter, a versatile team of musical comedy artists, will appear in their sketch, "A Budget of Nonsense," which is a sort of travesty burlesque on the Roman melodrama. Henry Bobker, the "Boy Behind the Suit Case," one of the most promising young comedians and character change monologist, offers an original novelty, making his changes in full view of the audience, from his mechanical suit case. The motion picture programme for the week will include the most interesting and recent releases with special musical accompaniments.

Glen Echo Park.

At Glen Echo Park this afternoon and evening the United States Soldiers' Home Military Band, under the direction of Conductor John S. M. Zimmermann, will appear in the fifth of the special Sunday popular concerts. As Fourth of July marks the zenith of the season in outdoor summer amusement resorts, the management of Glen Echo is busy at work on plans to make next Tuesday the most successful day the park has ever known, and, with the endeavor to establish new attendance records, there has been arranged a particularly elaborate and attractive schedule of events. Naturally, fireworks will form a prominent feature, and in this department Glen Echo will endeavor to outshine every exhibition of pyrotechnic elsewhere in this vicinity on Independence Day. For a week past several experts have been constructing, on the spacious lawn fronting the Ferris wheel, the large and varied selection of set pieces, bonoballs, and other novelties embraced in the programme of twenty-five numbers.

The chief number will be a representation in fire of Niagara Falls, showing a miniature aeroplane and "birdman" in flight and suggested by Lincoln Beachey's sensational performance of the same day. Inasmuch as the Glen Echo fireworks display on Tuesday will be a reproduction of the similar exhibition at the famous steel pier in Atlantic City, the management of the local resort asserts that this event will be the most spectacular of its kind yet attempted here. Glen Echo's usually brilliant appearance will be further enhanced for Independence Day by an extensive array of flags, bunting, and other decorations, and, aside from the many special features contracted for, the throngs who spend their holiday at the pretty playground overlooking the Potomac will find plenty of amusement provided by the half hundred attractions that are making the resort the mecca nightly of a large majority of local pleasure seekers.

Following Fourth of July week another innovation will be introduced at Glen Echo in the shape of an outdoor motion picture show to which admission will be free. Plans are also under way for the celebration of Montgomery County Day at the park, this event being scheduled for Wednesday, July 12.

Luna Park.

Luna Park, with its hundred or more different forms of amusement, will be one of the most attractive outing places near Washington this week. The park has been crowded with merry throngs during the warm evenings. The shoot-the-chutes, the merry-go-round, the ride around "The Great Divide," the trip through "The Panama Canal," the aerial swing, the dancing pavilion, and all the other myriad of out-of-door amusements have proved popular with the crowds that visit the big and brilliant grounds.

For this Fourth of July week special attractions to entertain the public have been arranged for by Manager Whiting. Prof. A. Alfreno, the acknowledged champion comedy and sensational high-wire walker of the world, with his family of five, one girl and four boys, will give one of the most thrilling outdoor entertainments every night that pleasure seekers from Washington and Alexandria have seen in many days.

A special display of fireworks also has been arranged for by Manager Whiting on the evening of the Fourth, with an especially prepared programme of music by the park's big band.

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DESCENDS FROM CRITIC TO PLAYWRIGHT.



WILLARD HOLCOMB.

Willard Holcomb, author of the dramatization of "Lorna Doone," which has its first production on any stage at the Belasco this week, although New York born and Buckeye bred, claims Washington as his home, and "commutes" to the metropolis, where he has an office in the Knickerbocker Theater Building. Holcomb graduated from an Ohio college in 1888, and the professors used to say that if he would only pay half as much attention to his studies as he did to amateur theatricals, journalism, and music he would have made a record as a student. However, as it happened, he was choosing the course that proved most useful to him afterward. Incidentally, Holcomb studied law, and although he shied at the bar, the experience has been very valuable to him.

On leaving college Mr. Holcomb became a dramatic critic, and for seven years straight worked in Washington in that capacity. During this period he was making experiments as a playwright, and his first effort, "Brown's Baby," was produced at a "tent" for the National Fencing by the late Annie Lewis and a cast which included William H. Conley, Hans Robert, and William H. Dupont, all of whom afterward became professional players. His next effort was "Her Last Rehearsal," produced for the Legion of Loyal Women by William Hagg, another Washington actor, now with the

vid Warfield. This was the first of the "bare stage" sketches, and after being played for two weeks by Fred Bond's stock company at the National Theater, held the vaudeville stage for seven straight seasons. For Home Land, another Washington favorite in opera, Mr. Holcomb adapted "Gringolre," with music by the late Julien Edwards, which tabloid opera Mr. Lind presented with success for a while, month in London, as well as for several seasons on the American vaudeville stage.

Mr. Holcomb then accepted the position of general representative for Lieber & Co. in New York, and for two seasons was associated with such stars as the late James A. Hearn, James O'Neill, Viola Allen, Mrs. Le Moyne, and Eleanor Robson. Leaving the Liebers, he devoted himself to playwrighting. Mr. Holcomb first tackled the musical comedy field, where he produced such successes as "Me Him A-L," "Fanchon's Pets," a stage adaptation of George M. Cohan's cartoon, "New York Town," and a romantic opera entitled "The Wood Witch."

In two of these he was associated with Mr. Cosley, who now figures as states director of Mr. Holcomb's enterprises. The phenomenal success of his dramatization of "St. Elmo" is fresh in the public mind, for it is still playing all over the country, and Mr. Holcomb's friends hope that "Lorna Doone" will duplicate its record.

THE COLUMBIA—"What Happened to Jones."

With an extra holiday matinee Tuesday to accommodate the Fourth of July crowds, the Columbia Players give promise of a record-breaking week at the popular F street playhouse this week with that exceedingly funny farce, "What Happened to Jones." The farce is from the pen of George H. Broadhurst, and while its action is continuous from the moment the curtain rises, for convenience sake the episodes are divided into three acts that in genuine, irresistible humor of dialogue and situation have never been excelled.

And what is more, the play affords such opportunities for costuming that the other members of the company may be counted upon to incite envy in the feminine heart as nothing has done heretofore—not even excepting Miss Nellson's magnificent gowns in "An American Widow." The characters in the play are Jones, who travels for a hymn book house, and carries playing cards as a side line, played by Arthur H. Van Buren; Ebenezer Goodly, a professor of anatomy, played by George W. Barber; Ebenezer's brother, the Bishop of Ballarat, by Stanley "Columbia" James; Richard Heatherly, Ebenezer's prospective son-in-law, by Everett Butterfield; Thomas

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ington Monument grounds, when President Taft and other distinguished government officials, members of his official family, and representatives of the army and navy, and 50,000 people attended, have been preserved through the moving-picture machines.

The initial public exhibition of the pictures, 4,000 feet of film, will be shown at the Casino Theatre, Seventh and F streets, this afternoon, and will be continued every morning, afternoon, and evening for one week. Following the close of the week's engagement in this city the pictures will be shown in many of the leading cities.

The pictures are said to have developed splendid views of every feature of the big mass, some 3,000 feet of the films being out of the ordinary high-class work, showing the largest gathering of Catholics ever assembling on a similar occasion. If you never saw a reproduction of yourself in moving pictures and attended the military mass, there is a strong probability that you were caught by the camera and will be shown on the field.

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